

**FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair
Mike DiPietro
Paul Fontaine, Jr.
Mike Hurley
Kristin Sweeney
Andrew Van Hazinga
Laura O'Kane, (assoc. member)

PLANNING OFFICE: Mike O'Hara

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the February 16th meeting were approved.

ANR plans

371 Sheldon Rd., Slater

Existing 90 acre parcel on north side of Sheldon Rd. proposed to be split into 7 ac. Lot 1 for existing house at 371 Sheldon, an 8 ac. Lot 2 and the 75+/- ac. remainder. Applicant had submitted plan at end of March. The property split needed to happen and close on property by April 15th or else bank loan would expire. After consulting w/ the Chair & Vice-chair, Mike O'H. had signed the plan, given the Board's policy on extenuating circumstances. Applicants intend on building a dwelling on new lot but keep the land in open space for their horses. Board review endorsed plan and were OK w/ it.

Minor Site Plan Review

306 Summer St. - KB Cars, Used Car Sales

Applicant Kofi Agyeman and Aaron Cosgrove present.

Board has several question about layout of spaces for display as shown on submitted plan.

Access to left side of site shown on plan is troublesome since it's on another parcel. The front parking spaces need to be adjusted.

Ms. Caron: Board cannot waive the 3-foot front setback from the sidewalk and building.

Agreed that the plan would be revised and resubmitted.

Continued to May meeting

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Joint Public Hearing - Tree Warden & Planning Board - Public Shade Tree/Scenic Road Act, proposed tree removal/trimming & removal of stone wall for driveways - Lots 2 & 3 Pearl Hill Road, Harbor Classic Homes

Glenn Lemieux, Harbor Classic Homes: Three trees in area of two proposed driveways, opposite Hillside Dr. The limits of driveways have been staked in the field. All are just outside or just touching the street layout. One large oak on the left will stay, the driveway can skirt around it.

Gary Withington, Hwy. Supt. & Tree Warden: The two trees proposed to be removed in question will not last long. He is OK w/ their removal.

Q: Type of house to be built? 3-BR ranch.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Van Hazinga) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to Approve removal of two trees and a portion of stone wall, provided that the stones removed are used to make a 90-degree return at either end of the wall. Vote unanimous in favor.

6:15 Special Permit - Mixed Use Development, 579 South St - Mark Gionet (continued from 3/15/16)
Hearing re-opened.

Sam Kelly, Vanasse Assocs. reviewed their Traffic Impact Study. During peak hours, impact on existing traffic will be very minimal. Sight distance is OK provided vegetation is cut back. Ashley Ridge's stockade fence is not on property line but behind it.

Jason Plourde, Tighe & Bond had performed a third-party peer review and offered his comments. Essentially, he agrees with Vanasse's conclusions on traffic impacts. Recommended that sight distance area be clear year-round.

Abutter Qs: What about turns into the site backing up traffic on South St. behind them? Why not look at Romano & South intersection as well? Conclusions of applicant's traffic study is wrong. There are not many gaps in traffic. There will be back up behind the Left turns into site.

Larry Sabeau, Hannigan Engineering reviewed details of plan – hasn't changed since last meeting. They will be providing a deceleration lane.

Ms. Caron: Density of project (8.5 units/ac.) is greater than many of the other PUDs that the Board has approved over the years. The abutting South Bend apts. (6.4) and Ashley Ridge (4.4) is less dense.
Mr. Van Hazinga: Also need more buffering to the neighbors.

How close is development to nearest neighbor, Blaquere? 18 feet to property line. No fencing proposed on south side. Mr. Blaquere concerned w/ light shining onto his property.
Paul Fontaine, Sr. suggested privacy fencing as high as possible on north (Ashley Ridge) side.

Mark Gionet suggests evergreens along property line rather than fence, but he could do fence.

Comment that the existing sidewalk on South St. needs to be extended from the end of the "Safe Rtes. to School" project to side driveway.

Abutters Qs: Applicant done any previous developments? Mark G: Built a couple duplexes in Marlboro & a couple SFDs in Fitchburg, but nothing of this size. Q: Will it be Section 8 housing? No.

Board comments:

Andy - too dense. Traffic will be bad with or without this development. Type & height of buildings do not fit in w/ the area.

Ms. Sweeney: Builder could work out the screening. The density is on the high end.

Mr. DiPietro agreed - too dense.

The Board was OK w/ the addition of the non-residential use.

Mark G: He needs the # of units to make project work, density is similar to South Bend Apts.

Board asked if applicant would want a vote now, or have a chance to amend plan, perhaps 24-28 units could work. Mark wanted to continue.

Hannigan Eng. will locate the limits of sight distance clearing in the field.

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to May 21. Vote in favor.

Special Permit & Site Plan Review - Retail redevelopment, 133 Water St. (former Pelletier's Bld. Supply.
Pat Doherty, engineer is out of town. Atty. Watts sitting in for him. Plan revised 4/15/16 based on comments at last meeting.

Ali Horasani reviewed findings of his Traffic Impact Study.

Among the issues discussed: Queue length at the southerly driveway, sight distance at northerly driveway, gap timing in existing traffic flow to allow traffic to pull out, possible re-timing of signal at Kimball & Water Sts.

Jason Plourde, Tighe & Bond had performed a third-party peer review and offered his comments. Ms. Caron suggested "No Left Exit" at Northerly driveway. Ali: If only right-out, there's ltd. room on site for queueing of traffic exiting.

Mr. Van Hazinga: Additional impacts of Central Plaza becomes fully occupied?

Ali: This was taken into consideration, would be a drop in the bucket

Noted that there's MART Bus Stops on both sides of street at Market Basket driveway. Need a crosswalk?

They will look into best location for that.

Re-timing of signal at Water & Kimball needed?

Public comment:

South bound left exiting Market Basket driveway are competing w/ lefts into M.B. driveway

Mary Jo Bohart: Room for truck maneuvering on site? Yes, was designed for that.

Mayor DiNatale: Pleased at demolition. Hopes will generate more development in area.

Paul Bouvier, Midtown Beef: concerned if changes to median strip in Water St., such as curbing.

His trucks need to cross over rumble strip

Motion made & seconded to continue hearing to May 17 meeting. Vote in favor.

Site Plan Review & Special Permit - Krikorian, mixed use redevelopment, 10 Main St., 1-11 Summer St., 15 Summer St.

Matt Fournier, Elite Construction, Bill Krikorian, Ron Talbot, architect and Jamie Rheault present.

Matt presented plans to renovate former Harper Furniture building and adjacent parcels into 66 units (34 1 BR & 32 2-BR). All market rate units. They aim to attract young professionals, which is an underserved market in Fitchburg. First floor will be 11,000 sq. ft. tenant space for an unnamed existing Fitchburg business.

Parking: 67 spaces proposed. First floor of new structure: 36 spaces. Lower level (enter from Sawyer Passway): 31 spaces. No assigned parking spaces. There will be three drop-off spaces at the rear of the Harper Bldg.

Matt read from handout giving specifics on the project.

Parking will be at a 1:1 ratio. They don't anticipate that all tenants will have vehicles. It will be a gated & secured area. Other parking is available on nights & weekends for other parcels owned by Micron.

Schedule: (1) Renovate Harper bldg., have temporary parking on other Micron parcels (2) Demolish fire station 3) build parking structure on adjacent lots.

There is a new roof on Harper bldg. Solid waste: will be interior trash containers, management will be by Empire Mgmt. There will be no on-site management.

Ron Albert (architect) described floor plan layout & elevations of building. Fully sprinklered. Elevator in both buildings.

Discussion about decorative plantings out front on sidewalk, they could do that.

Public Comment:

Matt Blouin, Trustee Myrtle Realty Trust, owns the builndg behind the diner. There already is a parking problem in the area. What about visiting guests? There's already a parking overload in the area.

Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director - New residents at Harpers would be customers for the diner and other existing businesses.

Jamie Rheault, W&B: This is in the Mill Conversion Overlay District. All impervious area is existing - no change proposed to stormwater management

Micron Products fully supports the project.

Q: Fiber for high-speed internet in the area?

Sal Emma, Micron: Yes.

Ms. Sweeney: The proposed redevelopment would be transformative to the area.

Mayor DiNatale: Agrees, fully supports it. It will transform that area.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to grant Special Permit with conditions.

- Subject to review & approval of Dept. heads
- Subject to review & approval by Board of final floor plans showing units, parking space layout, etc. Floor plans to be submitted prior to starting construction
- Façade & layout per elevations submitted. If materials/facade proposed to be changed, subject to review & approval by Board.
- Subject to review & approval by Board of change of use(s) for first floor tenant for verification of parking and compatibility of different uses
- Subject to lease agreement on nearby property for 16 overflow parking spaces for nights/weekends)
- Planned streetscape improvements (planter boxes, street trees, lighting, screening of 1st floor parking area, etc.) subject to review & approval by Board.
- Provisions for inside trash disposal, bike storage to be provided.

Vote 7-0 in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were deferred to later b/c of time constraints:

Proposed "Complete Streets" Policy

"Fayerweather St." - Waiver of subdivision covenant

Rollstone & Electric - Bridle Cross Ests. - Roundabout

Motion made & seconded to adjourn. Vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 11:00 p.m. (!)

Next meeting: 5/17/16

Minutes approved: 5/17/16